THE

Hindu Message

A Weekly Review of Indian and World-Problems from the Hindu Standpoint.

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CONTENTS.

A VISION OF INDIA:
India's places of Pilgrimage: By K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri, B.A., B.L. 17
A SONG OF SUPERLIFE:
By an Indian Dreamer 17
EVENTS OF THE WEEK. 18
LEADER:
Dharma and Life—Part II. 13. Marriage and Love. 19
What is Democracy. 21
SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS:
The Bhagavad Gita. By K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri, B.A., B.L., 22
The Endowments Bill. By G. Harischandra Row. 22
AGRICULTURAL:
Land-Problems in India. By V. Rangaswami Iyengar 24
MISCELLANEOUS:
The League. By K. R. R. Sastri, M.A., F.R.S. (Lond). 26
CORRESPONDENCE:
An Open Letter. To Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Aiyar Avl., M.L.A. 27
Reply. By T. V. Seshagiri Aiyar. 28

THE HINDU MESSAGE stands for

(1) Self-Government for India within the British Commonwealth,
(2) Co-operation with the different communities of India without prejudice to Hindu Dharma,
(3) Education of the Hindus as an integral part of the Indian Nation,
(4) Advancement of Material prosperity on a spiritual b sis and
(5) Dissemination of pure Hindu Culture.

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A Vision of India.

INDIA'S PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE.

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI, B A., B.L.,

Not far from Madras shines the sacred hill
Crowned with a temple high, serene and calm
The sight of which to spirit soothing balm
Doth bring. Each day with saintly wing and will
Two Vultures haunt the shrine so pure and still
At noontime when the blazing sunbeams warm
Illume the scene, I felt the holy charm
Which that sweet sacred scene did well instil.
And going further east, close by the shore
On that surf-beaten coast, men's hand and heart
Had made the rock record his Godward dream,
Great Arjuna his palms uplifted bore
In penance pure; each epic hero's part
Was deathless carved, and lit by Art's bright beam.

A Song of Super-Life.

BY AN INDIAN DREAMER.

XV

What beauty lies around me ?

The evening hath scattered its wealth of gorgeous glory over sky and earth.

Now comes Night drest in her mantle of stars and with the crescent on her diadem.

She brings the gifts of peace and dream.

The faint scent of flowers is abroad.

I am full of Thy presence above me, about me, and within me.

XVI

O Goddess with flying feet and averted eyes ! I am unfit to behold Thee ; so thou fliest from my grasp and gaze.

But I see thy golden lotus feet shining out of thy crimson robe.

Thou turnest Thy eyes a little towards me in divine sympathy.

I am drunk with the rapture of their tenderness.

The perfume from Thy tresses hath maddened my very soul.

I shall ever seek Thee with pilgrim feet !

XVII

O sacred Goddess of speech and song !
Let me meditate on Thee and Thy holy name.
Cleanse all my impurities of soul and speech !
Make my soul Thy melodious *Vina*.
May my thoughts of devotion be thy rosary.
May my poems and songs be thy book.
When all of mine is Thine wilt Thou not become me and mine !

Events of the Week.

The country could not have forgotten the Chauri Chaura horrors or yet the amazing judgment in the trial court sentencing 149 of the accused to the maximum penalty according to the law. If the former sent a thrill of horror throughout the land, the judicial finding partaking as it did of the nature of vindictiveness came upon the country as a revelation of the littleness of men, even judges, and their incapacity to look beyond the technique of the law which on oath they administer. It is therefore a matter of some gratification and relief that in the appeal court the sentences have undergone a very drastic revision, fourteen only being awarded sentence of death. Everybody will endorse the graceful tribute paid by the presiding judge in the course of the trial to Pandit Malaviya for his noble defence. Yet fourteen executions, we are sure they will no doubt be justified in view of the extreme heinousness of the offence, are still apt to produce consternation—which will not be lessened because the tragedy itself happened long ago. If a random patriotism or even if some primordial savagery were responsible for these actions a true understanding of their nature may yet help these souls on. In any case, such wholesale executions are apt to create or release psychic forces possible of working further mischief: and the public mind is likely to be disgusted by exhibitions of such executions in the mass. The occasion seems to demand the intervention of the Viceroy and the exercise of the Royal prerogative. The reasons for such exercise are not based alone on the spectacular effect such might have.

* * *

What is hoped almost against hope will be a new chapter in the Reparations tangle is introduced with the note which Germany sent the Allies in the opening days of the month. Germany proposes that twenty million gold marks shall be raised on bond issue, at normal rates, on the International money market, before the first of July, 1927, five milliards before the 1st of July, 1929 and five again before the first of July, 1931. The first twenty milliards shall be offered for subscription immediately. Interest on bonds up to 1st July, 1927, shall be paid into a special fund under the control of the Reparations Commission. If seventy milliards cannot be raised by loan before the 1st of July, 1927, interest at the rate of 5 p. c. thereon shall be paid from that date and also one per cent amortisation. If the two amounts of five milliards each cannot be raised fully before the dates fixed, an impartial international commission shall decide whether, when and how the amount outstanding can be raised. Germany will also make payments in kind, in accordance with the existing Treaties, to the extent still to be determined. "This," the Note declares, "is the utmost limit of Germany's economic capacity." After the weakening of the internal economic organism by the occupation of the Ruhr area, the German Government, even gravely doubts whether the proposal does not exceed Germany's capacity, but if the other side does not share this view, the whole Reparations Problem should be decided by an International Commission, free from political influence. The fulfilment of Germany's obligations depends upon the stabilisation of German currency, in which connection, it is essential that there shall be no more seizures and sanctions. The Note asserts that Germany is prepared to accept any agreement binding both France and Grmany and to submit all the conflicts, which cannot be settled diplomatically, to arbitration or reconciliation. The starting point in the negotiations must be the earliest possible evacuation of the Ruhr area, the restoration of conditions in the Rhineland in accordance with the Rhineland Agreement, liberation of Germans, who have been arrested and return of the Germans, who have been exiled.

* * *

The official Allied reply to this offer will be watched with interest: and perhaps before these lines are in print may have been sent. Press comments so far received from London, Paris and New York show that Germany's good faith is doubted. It is however significant that the majority of American morning newspapers think that the German offer is a possible basis of settlement and should not be brushed aside. There is no doubt that intelligent opinion, both among neutrals and others, will take this saner and moderate view. The omens, however, so far, are not very reassurring. The latest message says that the French Cabinet have decided that the terms are unacceptable. This is not to be wondered at. It has been evident for a long time that if a settlement of the German Reparations is to come which will not only be just but also equitable and will leave no seed to germinate of ill-will and future wars, that settlement will have to arrive in spite of France, largely because France is now controlled by persons who are either creatures of or identified with her steel and iron industry to whom it is a vital matter to expropriate German coal and iron regions. The next few days or weeks shall show whether the nations have lost any of that madness which a flushed and victorious militarism so plentifully generates. That the rehabilitation of Germany and Russia can alone restore normality to the European continent seems however to be generally accepted: and if statesmen will have the courage to utilise this offer and thus ease a tense, impossible situation, it is hard to say—knowing what we do of the separate ambitions, rivalries and jealousis of statesman. We shall doubtless see as we go.

* * *

The Poet Rabindranath Tagore is reported to have said :—

"Where the Mahatma made his fatal blunder was in attempting to achieve Hindu-Moslem unity by asking the Hindus to support the Khilafat movement. The agitation for the restoration of the Khilafat to Turkey and the return of some of her lost provinces is something that should have nothing to do with India, and certainly nothing to do with the Hindus. It is purely a Mohammadan religious question. By joining forces with the Khilafat leaders Mr. Gandhi played into their hands and betrayed the Hindus to the Mohammadans."

On this "*The Indian Social reformer remarks.*—The lack of insight and imagination displayed in these observations is astounding. The Khilafat was a religious question, it is true, but, as Sir Charles Townshend, the defender of Kut-el-Amara, wrote in the December number of *Asia*, the American journal, with truer understanding of the inwardness of the matter, "the Hindu population of India has made the cause of religious freedom of all the races of India its own" and that its espousal of the Khilafat cause was in pursuance of this high policy. Hinduism first proclaimed religious freedom and toleration in the world, when it proclaimed in the Vedas that One alone is and Him the world call by different names. It is not only freedom for itself, but freedom for all religions, that Hinduism proclaimed and Mahatma Gandhi acted as the true champion of a Hindu principle when he ranged the Congress alongside of the Khilafat movement. As for his betraying Hinduism, he exacted from the Khilafatists as the price of this support, adhesion to what is the law and the prophets for Hinduism, namely, Non-Violence or Ahimsa. Maulanas Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali are not believers in Ahimsa or Non-Violence. They told this writer so in so many words, adding that so long, however, as they accepted Gandhi's leadership, they held themselves bound to bow to that principle. We cannot think of a greater service to Hinduism than this.

* * *

The 'Lok Sangraha' a local daily of Poona publishes to-day (May 15) that Mahatma Gandhi is ill in the Yeroda Central Jail and has fever up to 105 degrees.

* * *

An A. P. I. message says that Mr. C. R. Das states that as there is a general desire in the country for a settlement between the two parties, he has resolved to attend the forthcoming meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay and calls upon other members of his party to do likewise.

The Hindu Message

Dharma and Life—Part. II.

XIII. Marriage and Love.

In taking up this difficult subject, we are aware that we labour under the great disadvantage of having no direct personal acquaintance with the social laws, customs, conventions, conditions and aspirations dominating the minds of men in the West. But our chief aim here is not to express our opinion, regarding them, but to consider the relation they bear to our own, and to place the latter before our own people in their true light so as to enable them to understand their value.

In the West, much is said of what is called "*Falling in Love*,"—a process in which both man and woman may take their part, or which may be limited to one only of the parties concerned. It is a psychological experience in which the heart of one human being is practically transferred from its original abode, and offered to and placed in charge of another. The process or passion of love evolves and grows, according to recognised or recognisable methods, but it may also be a sudden access of emotion appearing in consciousness as a luminous flash or violent explosion, unique, sudden and irresistible occuring without preparation or expectation. When love is spoken of as an *art*, we refer, not to its original appearance as an outburst of passion, but to the modes of development through the dexterous utilisation of one's opportunities and insight in order to bring about a complete fusion of two distinct personalities. It is also said that, in the art of love, man must take the initiative, so as to "unseal the mystery of the intimacies and audacities which the woman's heart may hold—" and that, though no acquired accomplishments of courtship may be of much avail, it lies with man alone to please woman so as to evoke her deepest and tenderest emotions and put forth her best and most earnest endeavours to make herself desirable to man.

We do not deny the truth or attractiveness of this account of love as it is depicted by its votaries in the West,—but we think the description applies to love as it really is in an undeveloped and purely material civilisation,—in a society, in fact, which regards the chief aim of sex to be a *union*, and looks upon love chiefly as a desire for the sense of *contact* pervading the mind and body, of two individuals,—in a society in which even the desire for race-continuance and race-preservation plays at best but a secondary part. In such a society, there may be government, war, constructive industry, the co-operative and civilising economics of commerce, and even the abundant efflorescence of literature and art in all their branches,—but love remains fundamentally a mere outburst of human passion, a plethora of emotion leading to sex-union and its resultant or attendant emotions of pleasure or pain, or, at best, to what is usually regarded as the purely secondary, though sane, result of race-preservation and race-progress. Hence we find that, at the present day, when the desire for personal comforts and enjoyments of all kinds and for freedom from personal responsibilities, whether of maternity or paternity is everywhere active, men and women in the West feel disposed more and more to abstain from marriage altogether, or at least to postpone it to as late a period of life as possible. Hitherto, owing to the social conditions of the past, the powers, passions and susceptibilities in man had a greater variety and depth than in woman; and love matured earlier and stayed longer among women than among men. Now, however, with the increased and equal opportunities for education and social intercourse for both sexes, all have an equal chance of playing their part in the organisation of National affairs and an equal amount of earnestness in their conception of the duties of patriotism and citizenship. Hence, the development and exhibition of love, tenderness, and affection are getting rarer; and a spirit of dreary, if not cynical, realism is abroad, which sets little store by old standards of chivalry, enthusiasm, or honour, and cares only for the experience of the elation and exultation arising from successful exploitation, whether it be in the relations of the sexes, or in those of national communities which are engaged in the organisation of economic subjugation or empire-building over foreign societies which are weaker than themselves or have neglected the art of aggressive and militant strife in their love of the life eternal.

It is the excesses prevailing today, whether in the formation and expression of opinion, or in the actual practice of life, that have led to the strange and bold reaction which we notice in certain quarters in the West. An American writer—Mr. D. C. Main,—described as a "specialist' in the treatment of the Insane, has recently written as follows:—"Marry for money or for social position, but not for Love. Love, as the world understands it today, is simply an attraction. This leads to thousands of disastrous marriages, and many disastrous marriages lead to insanity." Further, "a man should not contract marriage, simply because he is in love. Let him wait. He can love again, perhaps even more deeply." One of the greatest of living Englishmen, Professor Bertrand Russell, has said:—"The saintly, self-sacrificing woman belongs to the same order of ideas as the faithful servant, the loyal subject, and the orthodox son of the Church. The whole order of ideas has vanished from the civilised world." He also points out that the new idea of freedom is "making the old form of marriage impossible," and that, at present, "relations tend to become trivial and temporary, a pleasure rather than the satisfaction of a profound need,—an excitement, not an attainment." The famous German professor and historian, Treitschke, has also said:—"The attitude of our time towards men is chivalrous in theory, clownish in practice. Owing to the unnatural lateness of marriages, prostitution has become so common, and displays itself so impudently, that the whole tone of society has been demoralised by it. In addition, we have the calamitous idea of female emancipation. Women are mistaken when they suppose that they can influence men by masculine methods, or subdue us by glaring ferociously at us; the result of these efforts is visible in the bad manners of the present day. Politeness to a pretty girl is not a merit, but a natural instinct; real good breeding is shown in civility to an old lady. Judge the behaviour in any omnibus by this standard, and observe how men behave towards elderly women." All these testimonies—and many more such can be quoted, some, too, of a most damaging character—go to show that the Western conception of love, as above expounded, has broken down altogether under the stress both of modern rational criticism and of the aspiration after a more practicable, and less Utopian, union of the sexes. It will be clear that the break-down is entirely due to the exclusive reliance on *romantic* love as the basis and justification of marriage. An able American sociologist has well said:—"To gratify the amatory preferences of individuals, the romantic family has sacrificed patrimony and tradition; of late it has even gone to the extremity of sacrificing children." We think, therefore, that too much stress should not be laid on the appearance, in the human mind, of the passion of love, or even of its militant capture and enslavement of the human emotions, as the essential basis and condition of a true and becoming marriage.

In India, on the other hand, we regard Love, not simply as a strong passion, taking possession of the mind and influencing the relations of the sexes, but as the very essence of the Divine Nature or joy (*Ananda*) manifesting itself in all its relations to the universe. It is in fact, the one source of God's revelation of truth and virtue to man, in order to enable him to develop his own spiritual personality to the maximum of perfection. The one ultimate purpose and end for which not only human society, but even the universe, exists is to afford the opportunity for the development of the divinity in man. Swami Vivekananda has beautifully said:—"Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man." In truth, the entire revelation of Dharma is a means to the realisation of the perfection already in man. The Hindu system of marriage too, which forms an important and valuable part of Dharma, has for its aim to help, in its own manner and measure, to raise man to a sense and realisation of the perfection and divinity already in him. The Hindu marriage is not based on any merely scientific generalisation or investigation of rules of conduct prevailing among various communities of men, but is a part of the practical rules and maxims governing conduct, revealed to man as divine "commands" to be obeyed so that he may attain to everlasting joy and peace. The Supreme Being is not to be regarded as an omnipotent Estate of the realm which imposes its restraints and rules on a subject community and people, with or without the consent of its own leaders and representatives, but as a loving parent, guide, or teacher who knows what will confer lasting good on his son or disciple. The Hindu system of marriage is revealed by Heaven in order to help to found and maintain a Dharmic society composed of Dharmic families. In India, ethics is an essential and integral part of religion. It is, in fact, religion in its *earlier* phase, and is intended to serve as a preparation for the later direct

cognition and realisation of the Supreme Being. Religion enjoins marriage, and hence marriage is also to be regarded as a divine mandate to enable man and woman to fulfil Isvara's aim in creating the universe. God is Love, and God as Love manifests himself in marriage,—in its preliminaries and in its fruits, in the parents who take part in bringing it about, and in those who enter into the bond of holy wedlock and fulfil the life of mutual service and trust which helps to bestow all those graces of life and all those gifts and mercies from above which enable us to reach the final goal of the joy of spiritual realisation.

The sacred tie of matrimony, when once brought about is indissoluble. The strictest fidelity is expected from both sides, and is imposed, too, as a matter of supreme and imperatively sacred obligation. Any lapse, on one side or another, is a heinous sin. But, in consideration of the fact that human nature is weak and erring, the bond of matrimony is not dissolved. The parties to it usually resolve to cast a veil over the matter, even if they do not resume—as they often do, here as in the West, after mutual forbearance and forgiveness—their old status and relations in the family. Love unfailingly exercises its kindly sway as life moves on from stage to stage, exposing all its phases and moods ; and it enables men and women to glide on, without haste and without rest, towards life's destined goal, through mutual tolerance and unfailing tenderness, while rendering services to each other as well as to God and fellow-men. The family brought about by the Hindu system of marriage is thus purely Dharmic. Its origin lies, not in a mere outburst of passion, untamed and uncontrollable, but in the imperative call of Dharma and the unquestionable mandate of Heaven ; in its course through life it confers, upon the members of the Dharmic family it helps to form, the many graces and satisfactions arising from the fulfilment of the tender emotions of the human heart but without sacrificing the individuals who are parties to it when, from the weakness incidental to human nature, they have a momentary lapse and fall ; it helps to maintain and sustain an everlasting ethical society and civilisation which is also fully in consonance with the dictates and demands of reason ; it finally helps man and woman to devote themselves, cheerfully and confidently, to the task of making what advances are possible towards man's final goal of emancipation from the bondage of Samsara.

What is Democracy.

According to a *Statesman* special cable, the House of Commons has adopted a resolution for establishing a Joint Parliamentary Committee to examine the laws of countries with a Parliamentary system of Government with a view to desirable alterations in British law. This has raised in the minds of a contemporary the question if the Parliamentary system of Government has outlived its days of usefulness. And our contemporary presumes that the enquiry will relate mostly to constitutional law and usage. Well, there are many more things which it is permissible to presume. The governance of England has now come to the hands of a party which commands a parliamentary majority based paradoxically on a minority of votes. The traditional two party system has been broken : and with the impossible quarrels between the two sections of Liberals, it would almost seem the future will see four groups. And should Labour have a spell of power, it is more than possible, it is almost certain, that fissures will develop dividing it into two groups of theoretical impossibilists and compromising, practical statesmen. The deep instincts of English for order and representative Government, allied to a mentality that cannot rise above the concrete, will no doublt insist on a reform of the electoral machinery, say in the direction of proportional representation. The two historic parties are pledged to the neck in regard to the Reform of the Lords. Mr. Bonar Law conceals beneath a homely exterior a very fair share of parliamentary craft ; and the Committee may be a happy way of giving temporary quietus to inconvenient questions a Tranquillity Cabinet may be exposed to. Again, it has been asked if the Mother of Parliaments itself feels that it has ceased to be the model representative, democratic, sovereign legislature. Passing over the recent controversy over the treaty-making rights of the Overseas Dominions, it seems fairly obvious that the present decade has seen a decay of democratic Government in England or elsewhere. The further observation may be ventured that the Parliament of England was much more democratic when it was composed of less representative individuals and led by aristocrats or men whose aristocratic connections led them to seats of power. Though Labour, which by all rights ought to be considered a democratic party, has in these late years made marvellous progress and has come to be spoken of as the rightful Opposition with all that it means, there need, we think, be no hesitation in calling it other than a democratic party. As yet it is only a class-conscious individulism that dominates the party. Looking over other countries and watching representative Government, a political philosopher may well wonder what connection there is between democracy and parliamentary government.

This brings us at once to the question put as the heading of this article. Dean Inge in an article which he contributed to the *Atlantic Monthly* for March, 1922, deprecated the emotional value attached to the term, democracy, and bespoke the necessity of using it in the proper and restricted sense which was its, namely, government by the people. Now it is a grave question if emotional values do not really belong to that term. It is first this emotional value that many consider of the highest value in measuring human progress. Democracy refers, it may be useful to repeat again, not to a form of Government as verbal purists like Dean Inge may contend—and contend quite reasonably perhaps from one point of view —but to a state of mind. It stands for the thought of equality, not the rabid nonsense some moderns preach, but equality in the fact of common humanity, not in gifts or position or personality. This is the meaning in which that concept is used in the Declaration of American Independence. Dean Inge's own countryman, Chesterton, hits this off in a telling manner when he says it is not undemocratic to kick a a butler, but it is extremely undemocratic to say that one must make allowances for his being a butler. The aristocratic mind, while it may be benevolent, emphasises distinctions among men ; the democratic mind, while it knows all the many differences, emphasises the common equality on the common basis of humanity. In fact this is the sense in which many have thought and said that we cannot separate God from democracy, that *vox populi vox dei* or that Christ was the greatest of democrats, and that the second great command-

ment of human brother-hood is the expression of the democratic mind. To the ordinary Hindu, at any rate, it is an obvious truism that the measure of the progress of civilisation is based on the spread of the sentiment which tries to find expression in the words "democratic mind."

Social and Religious.

The Bhagavad Gita.

With an English Exposition

By K. S. Ramaswamy Sastri, B.A., B.L.

(The substance of the lectures delivered at the Students' Sanatana Dharma Sabha, Trichinopoly.)

ADHYAYA X.

(Continued)

अश्वत्थः सर्ववृक्षाणां देवर्षीणां च नारदः ।
गन्धर्वाणां चित्ररथः सिद्धानां कपिलो मुनिः ॥२६॥

Of all trees I am Aswattha; of Devarishis (rishis among gods) I am Narada; I am Chitraratha among the Gandharvas; and among the Siddhas I am Kapila Muni.

NOTES

1. *Devarishis*—Those devas who while being devas have attained *rishihood* by becoming Mantradrashtas.

2. *siddhas* are those who from their birth have peerless Dharma, Jnana, Vairagya and Aisvarya.

उच्चैःश्रवसमश्वानां विद्धि माममृतोद्भवम् ।
ऐरावतं गजेन्द्राणां नराणां च नराधिपम् ॥ २७ ॥

Among horses, know me as Uchchaisravas born at the churning for nectar; know me as Airavata among elephants and as the king among men.

आयुधानामहं वज्रं धेनूनामस्मि कामधुक् ।
प्रजनश्चास्मि कन्दर्पः सर्पाणामस्मि वासुकिः ॥२८॥

Of weapons I am Vajra; of cows I am Kamadhenu; I am Kandarpa, the source of offspring; and of serpent I am Vasuki.

NOTES

1. Sri Venkatanatha says that the Lord's meaning is that among the forms of love, the love that has as motive not physical pleasure but the generation of offspring is divine.

अनन्तश्चास्मि नागानां वरुणो यादसामहम् ।
पितॄणामर्यमा चास्मि यमः संयमतामहम् ॥ २९ ॥

Of Nagas I am Ananta; of water-deities I am Varuna; I am Aryama among Pitris; and of the lords of rewards and punishment I am Yama.

प्रह्लादश्चास्मि दैत्यानां कालः कलयतामहम् ।
मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं वैनतेयश्च पक्षिणाम् ॥ ३० ॥

Of Daityas I am Prahlada; of measures I am Time; I am the lion among beasts; and I am Garuda among birds.

NOTES

1. कालः कलयतां—another meaning is that of the agencies who assign by measure and calculation punishment to evil, He is *Kala* (mrityu)

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ॥ ३१ ॥

Of purifiers I am Vayu (wind); of warriors I am Rama, Makara among fishes; and I am Ganga among rivers.

NOTES

1. Sri Madhwacharya says:— आनन्दरूपत्वात्पूर्णत्वात् लोकरमणत्वाश्च रामः ।

The Endowments Bill.

By G. Harischandra Row.

Our complaint is not so much against particular clauses or phrases of the recent Hindu Relgious Endowments Bill—though it is certainly faulty in many particulars,—as against the Bill itself, so that even if it were thoroughly amended it would still be unacceptable to us.

Breach of Religious Neutrality.

It involves a breach of religious neutrality to which successive rulers of British India have pledged themselves.

The right of making laws for one religion cannot safely be conceded to persons professing a different religion or even the same religion in quite a different light and form.

If diversion of funds belonging to our religious bodies and religious heads, together with the imposition of a Board to control them, without consulting the opinions of the worshippers and disciples who alone are entitled to have a voice in such matters, if, in short, such procedure be no interference with religion, what else would that be? And if such arbitrary and unprecedented action could not aggravate the general discontent due to economic and political causes, what else would aggravate it?

History shows that people everywhere have clung to their religious forms and beliefs with zeal and determination, though these might appear superstitious to the scientific eye, and have, whenever any insult has been offered to them, lost their temper, committing indiscretions for the sake of their religion. It would be idle to argue that those forms and beliefs were no religion, that they sprang from superstition, and that a little enlightenment would clear people's vision so as to expose their own folly; for the question is not whether a particular practice is or is not born of superstitious notions, but whether interference with it would or would not enrage them; and since such interference would cause unrest, sometimes violence also, statesmanship cannot afford to lose popularity by people's ignoring this psychological fact and violating sentiment. During the administration of Sir George Barlow the sepoys at Vellore broke into mutiny, apprehending that their religion was in danger on account of certain regulations in uniform. Suppose some enlightened theologians had come forward and proved that beards, caste marks and ear-rings did not at all constitute religion; but would they have succeeded in satisfying the mutineers? Similarly, the introduction of greased cartridges was the immediatecause of the great Indian Mutiny

in 1857; some Chemical experts, let us suppose, had arrived on the scene and demonstrated that fat was essentially the same as Ghee so that those who use the latter might use the former without scruple, or that the fat of the pig did not materially differ from that of the cow so that those who would touch the latter might touch the former without hesitation, could any such demonstration have silenced the Hindus or the Mussalmans? It would indeed take centuries for all mankind to become uniformly scientific in their outlook; superstitious men there must be; and in dealing with them, statesmanship goes along the line of the least resistance. But, unfortunately, this principle has often been violated by politicians in all countries, with the result that this earth which ought to resemble Heaven is made to resemble Hell.

India is a land whose people do not take undue interest in politics, do not care to question by whom they are ruled, provided of course that they should not lose their elementary rights, should not, above all, be molested in the enjoyment of their religion, however antiquated and unscientific it might appear to an up-to-date scientist; and if there is any country whose people are by nature peaceful and law-abiding, who profess a religion that makes for peace and harmony, who always wish to live in peace and die in peace and wish others likewise live and die in peace and bliss, it is India and India only. Such great people deserve better treatment than what is implied by such measures as the Endowments Bill. To flout public opinion and pass a Bill that upsets and dishonours their most cherished religious institutions would be the height of diplomatic folly, of political bankruptcy, in these critical times of general unrest and ebullition caused by famine, pestilence, over-taxation, and maladministration. In the interests of England as well as India such measures, therefore, should never have been entertained at all; and though the Bill, as ill-luck would have it, has been allowed to pass through the Legislative Council, yet, it is not too late for a remedy; since His Excellency the Viceroy could, by using his prerogative graciously and gracefully, veto this unpleasant and unwarranted piece of legislation and thereby win the hearts of millions who are now very much depressed or perturbed by the impending innovation.

It is wrong to say that the Bill, being a provincial measure, will not affect the rest the country. Southern India unlike Northern India has preserved her magnificent temples of ancient origin and exquisite design, attracting numerous pilgrims from all quarters, and has besides been the birthplace of famous leaders like Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, and Vallabha, whose religion is adopted and successors or representatives are revered by the people throughout India. Moreover, if to-day temples and Mutts of this province should be aimed at, tomorrow those of other provinces also might be attacked; and so when one part of the country is in danger others must hasten to its relief; meetings should be convened and resolutions of protest communicated to the authorities.

No Representation.

Some were sleeping; they were not alive to the necessity of entering the Councils; some, again, followed Mr. Gandhi and did not, whether wisely or not, stand for election; and of those who stood and got themselves elected, many could be classified as either too indifferent to their constituencies or too weak to fight for popular rights; and consequently, when measures like the Endowments Bill were passed with acclamation or at least by a large majority, it could not be supposed that their passage necessarily signified popular approval.

Moreover, the electorates in this country are yet extremely defective, many interests being left unrepresented, and many persons representing unwilling electorates. For making laws affecting religion or religious institutions the accredited leaders of religion or the acknowledged heads of Religions Institutions alone should be called as the most competent for the purpose; they should, at any rate, form a majority in the Legislature; for it would be an anamolous injustice for a Legislative body of lay men to frame regulations on ecclesiastial questions. Any such attempt would in a Western country cause someting like a revolution: and although in India by the restraining influence of her religion and civilization such outbursts of violence are rarely to be apprehended, still, there being a limit to human patience, feelings of moral indignity might be aroused interfering with the harmonious relations between the rulers and the ruled, so that the latter, who when ruled according to their wishes and treated in a sympathetic spirit would offer millions of pounds or millions of men to the former, might be disposed to offer no assistance at all or offer a few farthings or a few manikins only when bound by laws made in the teeth of opposition and kept down by sheer application of force; and at no other time would the value of a country's hearty co-operation be more manifest than in moments of danger to the Empire, as, for instance, during the late European conflagration.

Meanness.

Even Musalmans, as a rule, did not venture to deprive religious institutions of their property; for though some may have been a little hard in their invasions, yet, when once a province submitted to their rule, they at once gave up their old antagonism, respected the sentiments of the conquered, preserved their places of worship, and even granted large tracts of land for maintenance. The much-abused Tippu Sultan, for instance, treated the heads of Sringeri and other Mutts with due respect, made contributions towards their up-keep, and in the war with the English implored all to offer prayers in their temples for victory, adding that it was a common danger that threatened them—a danger, as he put it, both to his throne and their religion. At Bhadrachalam in the Godavari District there is a temple built by Gopanna, otherwise known as Ramadas, the Tahsildar of the place, with the Nawab's money in his custody; and though this officer suffered imprisonment for this appropriation of public revenue, yet, he was subsequently released, the temple, thus erected receiving State support, so that every annual festival at Bhadrachalam sees officials with presents from the court of His Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad. Politicians in British India if they wish to be remembered for their justice and generosity, should follow the example of our noble Musalman rulers, past and present, and pay something to our religious institutions, if possible; if nothing, however, could be given, let at least nothing be taken!

ENCROACHMENT ON PROPERTY.

Any just and efficient State would protect property, private or public; and those, who contend that money is lying idle in temples and monasteries and intend to utilise it for other purposes, violate this obligation; they commit themselves to the Bolshevic principle of nationalising property. The flood of Bolshevism is in these days submerging many a land; and where any prudent and faithful body of politicians may well be expected to do their best in arresting the flow for the security of their State, it is regrettable that some should suffer themselves to be carried away by the current and even accelerate its march by carrying such a measure as the Endowments Bill with their own hands. Why should we condemn the present leaders of Russia?—for they too declare their aim to be public good, and just as our Bill contemplates the employment of property belonging to temples and monasteries in some public work like the spread of education, so do the Bolshevic leaders too seek to devote the surplus land and money of the landlord and the capitalist to those who possess no land and no money. It is said that money should not be idle, as it is in our religious institutions. But it is only idle economists that hold such opinions; for money is naturally mobile, and even when buried underground it will gush out one day and quench the thirst of the fortunate. Why should, again, our Utopian Economists deposit their savings in some Bank or invest it in some paying concern? If wealth thus saved and accumulated would be of service in hard times, so would it be in the case of our institutions too; when, for instance, their income falls, amounts may be drawn from reserve funds for daily expenses, and when the buildings themselves fall, they can be restored with such money; in short, funds, being more essential to a public institution than to an individual or family, cannot be branded as idle or superfluous and be prudently diverted to other objects. Of public institutions, again, religious more than secular ones always require something to fall back upon; for while secular matters may retain their interest, spiritual ones are often unable to command appreciable attention.

Again, if it were right to tap one public institution to feed another, then the funds of one department in Government service must be transferred to another department, of a school in one locality to a school in another locality, of Christian Churches to Musalman Mosques, of Aryasamaj Gurukulas to Brahmosamaj Mandirs, of Widow Homes to Coffee Clubs, and lastly, the funds of the Women's University at Poona must be handed over to the Hindu University of Benares or the Musalman University at Alighar! Again, why are Musalman and Christian and other institutions not included in the Bill? Probably, those people appear too strong for our legislators!

Some argue that education is too important to be neglected, that the income of the State is not sufficient for it, and that therefore temples and other religious institutions should support it. If the financial position of India would not admit of universal education, then the reasonable course would be to be content with as many schools as might be maintained with the amount set apart for education out of the revenue, or better still, abolish the Educational Department altogether to the great relief of the taxpayer—a department that, as the Government also must be aware by this time, has produced, though indirectly and unconsciously, a brood of athiests, materialists, and revolutionaries. Let education be a *transferred* subject—*transferred* not to those between whom and people there is a wide gulf of difference, but to the people themselves who, I am sure, can understand their wants and their means much better than any of their detractors or dictators. Any proposal to have education at the expense of religion sounds blasphemous. Nor is sanitation so important as to absorb religious money; for if sanitation purifies one's exterior—it often pollutes one by adoption of mistaken science—religion, purifying the interior as well as the exterior, is double sanitation, and demands double the amount devoted to what is called sanitation.

Agricultural.

Land-Problems in India.

By. V. RANGASWAMI IYENGAR.

From our acquaintance with the land problems in the West we can now see, that the State is the foremost factor in determining the character of economic life of a community; for the State, as social evolution points out, is a functional organ in the social constitution, entrusted with the task of providing means conducive to the stability and progress of the latter and it therefore makes itself felt in every fibre of the social being. To talk of a society apart from its State-personality is to talk of a physical body apart from its head. Until the time of the French Revolution, the European States, contrary to this law of nature, stood apart from society compelling the latter to serve its own ends; and consequently the land-policy was based on the notion that the revenue derived from land was the income derived from its property, and the cultivators were mere tenants-at-will or serfs. This conception which was responsible for the depression of agriculture and for the deprivation of primary rights in the peasants to live as men, is now changed and the fiscal and economic policy of the modern European States is solely dicated in the interests of society to serve whose ends the State-personality is said to be brought into being. The important solutions, which the European statesmanship has arrived at in respect of agrarian problems, may be briefly stated as follow :—

(1) Abolition of feudal tenure and recognition of private ownership.

(2) The application of the principles governing the levy of income-tax to the State demands on land.

(3) Special State measures–advancement of loans by the State for the purchase of feudal rights by the peasant-proprietors, establishment of co-operative societies and long-term mortgage-banks, and other facilities, legislative, administrative, educational etc., for the improvement of agriculture and all connected with it, i.e., Land-owners, tenant-farmers, labourers, artizans etc.

The Government of India in their Resolution dated the 16th January 1902 have laid down the principle in respect of their Land Revenue Policy. "By the ancient Law of the Country" says the Resolution "the ruling power is entitled to a certain portion of the produce of every acre of land unless it has transferred its rights thereto. The procedure by

which that portion is determined is styled the Settlement of the Land Revenue." The Resolution further says in the concluding paragraph "that historically its Land Revenue policy owes its immediate origin to practices inherited from the most decadent period of native rule." Why? Have not the land-policies of the Modern European States, emanating as they did directly from the immediate and decadent medieval rule which we saw, stood for topsy-turvydom viz., oppression, chaos and disintegration, as all decadent periods in history always stand for topsy-turvydom, undergone radical changes—changes dictated by the progressive forces of the present age? Why should then the British Government in India alone follow the practices of the decadent native rule to which it has succeeded and refuse to remodel the Land system here in the light of the experiences of the West? Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that the evils of the decadent native rule have to a great extent been removed and the Land-system restored to the original and ideal condition. Even then, the justification for the continuance of the old practices could rest, if it could be made to rest at all, only on this ground. The old Hindu Polity, devised to suit the then social and economical condition, must still be found performing its original functions amidst the peculiar environments of ancient times. In the absence of this primary condition, it is indefensible in principle as it is opposed to progress, to fit in the old and much antiquated fiscal system, inseparable from the polity founded on the inspired writings of Manu or Mahomet, to a new political organisation cast altogether in a different mould. The British Government in India is (said to be) conducted in accordance with the dictates of modern statesmanship: therefore, the fiscal system of the Modern State alone, in its entirety, can have application in this country at present. If a bodily structure with features half man and half beast could be conceived, then the association of the old fiscal system with the modern polity may be permissible. From the account given below of the ancient Land System we will be able to see that the present Land-policy is neither in accord with the juridical writings of the Hindus or Mahomedans, nor with the actual facts relating to Land Administration of Hindu or Mahomedan rule *under normal conditions*. How the ancient Governments—Hindu or Mahomadan, dealt with the questions concerning Land, is a matter that ought to concern more a student of economic history than the administrator of today.

It is curious that the agitation in this country for land-reform is carried on in a manner which admits of the very principle which the Government have adopted and reformers object to.

Clear enunciation of principle in a matter of vital importance of this kind is first needed before any proposal for reform is considered; for acting on erroneous principle is sure to lead to injurious consequences. The advocates of permanent settlement, standing as they do on the firm ground of private ownership, act upon "half-net" theory which does possess the characteristics of rent but not of tax. The distinction between rent and tax is clearly pointed out by the eminent statesman, the Marquis of Salisbury, who held the office of the Secretary of State for India. He says: "To the modern statesman the refined distinctions of the economic school are a solid living reality from which he can as little separate his thoughts as from his mother-tongue. To us it may seem indifferent whether we call a payment *revenue* or *rent* so we get the money; but it is not different by what name we call it within *his* hearing. If we say that it is *rent*, he will hold the Government in strictness entitled to all that remains after profits have been paid, and he will do what he can to hasten the advent of the day when the State shall no longer be kept by any weak compromises from the enjoyment of its undoubted rights. If we pursuade him that it is *revenue*, he will note the vast disproportion of its incidence as compared to that of other taxes, and his efforts will tend to remedy the inequality and lay upon other classes and interests a more equitable share of the public burden. I prefer the latter tendency to the former. So far as it is possible to change the Indian fiscal system. it is desirable that the cultivator should pay a smaller proportion of the whole national charge. It is not in itself a thrifty policy to draw the mass of revenue from the rural districts, where capital is scarce, sparing the towns where it is often redundant and runs to waste in luxury. The injury is exaggerated in the case of India where so much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent."

From this it is evident that what the Government of India obtain from land through the two forms of settlements, permanent and periodical, is only rent but not tax. The difference between these two settlements consists only in this. In one case the rent is fixed subject to no revision of enhancement in future, while in the other, rent is settled periodically. In the demand for permanent settlement therefore State-ownership is undoubtedly implied; and rent is only paid to a landlord by this tenant cultivator. As long as the Indian Land revenue is made to assume the character of rent, so long the owner i.e., the State as the receiver of rent shall not be justified in granting permanent settlement, inasmuch as the State, the landlord will then have to lose its share in the unearned increment, which would accrue to it in future. If the periodical revision of land revenue results in the automatic increase in rent, it is due more to the system born of erroneous principle than the desire for increase of revenue on the part of the State. From the cultivator's stand-point, permanent settlement deserves condemnation. There is no such thing as permanent income. Variations in agricultural incomes are far greater than those from industry and commerce which are assessed with reference to their incomes of each year. In his report on "Rise in Prices" Mr. Dutta has shown that, during the period of his inquiry i.e., 21 years ending in 1912, there were only two normal years and damages to crops owing to various causes were great in the remaining years with the result that seven severe famines occurred during the period, carrying away millions of men and cattle and these famines did not spare the permanent settlement areas; There can be no escape from this situation, unless and until the land-policy in this country is laid on the lines indicated by modern statesmanship.

Every modern State, rejecting the theory of State landlordism, takes its dues in the shape not of rent but of tax and in doing so reaches only those land-holders whose incomes exceed the minimum limit considered as essential for comfortable and healthy existence. In a word, the tax, from the land is raised like other taxes only in order to meet "the running expenditure of Government" which is previously sanctioned by the Legislature. The method of raising land revenue in this country is opposed to sound canons of finance and is also highly repugnant to modern statesmanship, as the raising of revenue before expenditure as determined by Legislature is likely to lead to wastage of public funds. The government of India with prospective revenues of a large magnitude indeed before them have very often to invent sources of expenditure. They raise revenue not because they are to meet specific expenditure fixed already by the Legislature like the other Modern States, but because they might with funds at their disposal find in future, channels for expenditure, over which there is no legislative control.

That this policy has had already a very depressing effect on our agriculture is very patent. Do not the undermentioned figures stand to the world as a telling commentary on the present policy in that, India, of all the civilised countries, occupies the lowest place in point of agricultural production even after a century of British rule? If we take for unit the average value per hectare in Italy, we obtain the following figures—

Yield per hectare (2. 47 acres)	
Italy ...	100
India ...	51
Germany ...	121
France ...	122
Egypt ...	153
Japan ...	213

(The Encyclopoedia Britannica Vo. 15 page 197 11th Edition.)

If agriculture in this country were to be rescued from its present deplorable condition, the Indian land policy, which is still allowed to rest upon notions discarded in the West as antidiluvian and as opposed to progress, must be begun to be viewed in the light of the experience of the progressive States in the West. In the interests of civilised and progressive administration and of the agricultural population especially, this ruinous practice should, therefore at an early date, be entirely substituted by the one that obtains in the progressive States in the matter of raising revenue from lands.

Before we come to discuss the reforms needed in our land administration, correct ideas as to the theories and practices of the previous Governments—the Hindu or Mahomedan, in respect of their land polices, might be found useful, so that they will in the first place remove erroneous notions now prevalent regarding their policies and they would further furnish some object-lessons for our guidance.

To be continued.

Miscellaneous

The League.

A Study in quick metamorphoses.

By K. R. R. Sastri, M. A., F. R. S. (Lond.)

From Wilson's opening speech in the Peace Conference about the necessity of a League of Nations to the desperate casuistry with which Mr. Bonar Law apprehended about the fate of the League if Britain were to interfere in the Ruhr mismanagement, the world has moved from bad to worse so far as the fate of the League is concerned.

A Story of tragic events.

The philosopher-statesman returned to his country to plunge into a grave illnes, and the reply of the American Senate was forty-five reservations. President Harding began the policy of official dissociation from European complications. The only vigorous supporter of the League on the other side of the Atlantic turned a harmless "observer" of bloody revolutions enacted in the Continent. The once loudly hailed arbiter of the Trans-Atlantic began to raise and stand on the Lodge Reservations.

Britain's inconsistencies.

No discriminating observer ever expected a thorough move towards international solidarity and open diplomacy from the "Welsh Wizard." If there was any corner where Mr. L. G. could have played his game with success, that was the tortuous concave of secret diplomats. From Mr. Asquith's learned disquisitions on international solidarity to Mr. Bonar Law's "unhappy experience of the League of Nations," Britain's treatment of the League is found full of inconsistencies and lip-homages. Had we excluded from the arena the respectable Viscount Grey and the persuasive Lord Robert Cecil, the disillusionment would have been long ago complete. The frank General Smuts put the whole world under obligation when he referred to the Peace Conference as the "Seething Caulderon of human greed and passion" The land-grabbing instincts of the European found another virgin soil in the convenient mandatory system; and the Anglo-Saxon was not to be left behind in the race.

French machinations ahead.

While all along our modern Jesus was thinking he had scored certain points for his pet child, "the Tiger" was fast busy with his game. Already experts like J. M. Keynes have depicted to us the unequal game in which Mr. Wilson was engaged, with the result that "the Collapse of the President has been one of the decisive moral events of history."* With the fame of clear thinking to their credit, the one game of territorial aggrandizement and full reparations for their sufferings has been pursued with unrelenting severity by the French. The sensation which prevailed in Paris over the Mosul Oil Papers, the Shylock-like insistence on "definite guarantees" from Germany, and the cold, ruthless policy that is now being pursued in the Ruhr country in the face of the indifference of Britain and the suppressed anger of U. S. A.—This is a story of grim determination of the victor not even equalled by the policy of Germany in 1871. To France, the Reparation Commission is more important than a thousand and one Leagues of Nations.

Russia and Germany Still Non-Members.

Bolshevik Russia and Republican Germany are still outside the League. The late Dr. Frederic Harrison was criticising the League more than once on its one-sided character; and the admission of Hungary last year had only the qualified approval of her neighbors of the Little Entente. It was the solemn opinion of the French Premier that "Bolshevists are a danger to French Society"‡ during the critical Russian debate in Jan 7,1919; and it is highly doubtful if a salutary change has yet come over the minds of the diplomats of the West European Countries. How far the finality of the decisions of the 52 States in the Assembly at Geneva is being seriously limited by the exclusion of Big Powers like Germany and Russia is yet to be realised by that picturesque gathering. Shrewd observers have been pointing to the existence of the Council of Ambassadors and the Reparation Commission as an anomaly, if the League were to be reckoned as a force in matters international.

The lesson.

Cheap wit and shallow philosophy have decried the League too early enough; responsible Statesmen have left it to the charge of semi-dreamy harmless opponents; and discerning observers like Bryce and Balfour were found emphasising on the want of stability in the settlement and the creation of new irredentas." America (U. S. A.) is aloof; Britain has cultivated an indifference towards the League; France cares not for the existence of such a moral force; Germany and Russia are excluded from it; and the Asiatic powers are grumbling within it. Wilsonian "everybody's business" is, as in all such cases, turning out to be "no man's business." We are constrained to ask, has the Great War been fought in vain?

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* Vide "The Economic Consequences of the Peace" by J. M. Keynes P. 34.

‡ Appendix C. "The Prime-Minister" By Harold Spender p. 398.

Correspondence.

An Open Letter

To Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Aiyar Avl., m.l.a.

Sir.,

The announcement made in the "*Madras Mail*" of the 12th April that you wish to stand for re-election to the Legislative Assembly induced me to address this letter to you through the Press. As belonging to the Orthodox section of the Hindus I was surprised to see the announcement lacked in one important particular. I expected that as an honest man vehemently opposed to any form of "intellectual dishonesty" (vide *Daily Express May, 1921*) you will make a clear announcement that you do not require the votes of those who still wish to maintain and live up to the ideals set by those who were intellectually dishonest. Without in the least meaning any disrespect either to you personally or for the principles for which you stand or for your intellectual convictions I wish to bring to your kind consideration that the orthodox people who form the bulk of the population are not enamoured of your reforms of the Hindu Law by piece-meal legislations. I am subject to correction if the orthodox people do not form the majority of the Hindus and I quite agree that you are entitled to guard the interests of the minority from the tyranny of orthodoxy. I believe you are aware that the orthodox people though in a majority are weak, disorganised and and voiceless. They belong to a rapidly dying race. In a generation or two at the most, they will be nowhere and reformers like your esteemed self will have a smooth way in realising their cherished objects. It is exactly therefore that you should show some compassion towards the orthodox community and allow it to pass away without feeling any agony, for chivalry does not consist in striking a fallen foe. I mean sir, that you have not made any provision in your recent Hindu Law reforms bills which have become Acts to safeguard the interests of the orthodox people who still wish to be governed by the intellectually dishonest commentators like Vignaneswara. I therefore wish to point out that the orthodox community does not feel itself safe at your hands in case you are re-elected to the Assembly. We do not know where the reforms on Hindu Law is going to stop. In your letter to the Daily Express (Sunday Morning May 1st 1921) you have clearly stated that you are going to introduce reforms in the Hindu Law as in your view "the existing Law is entirely opposed to the sentiments and aspirations of the people." By "people" I believe you mean the reformers. Otherwise the sentence has no meaning since the orthodox people have no other aspirations beyond their extreme desire to live up to the ideals set up by their intellectually dishonest forefathers. In another letter to the *Hindu* (21st June 1921) you have said "that the present state of Hindu Law does not do credit to our patriotism or our intelligence." You are perfectly entitled to speak for the party to which you belong, but it does not necessarily follow that what you say is nothing but truth. According to you it seems that when the "Judges of the British administration" introduced changes in the Hindu Law by their strange decisions it did not become "intellectual dishonesty" for "there can be no doubt that they honestly endeavoured to bring the law in conformity with the prevailing ideas of the people." (*Daily Express* 1—5—21) But when the indigenous commentators attempted to harmonise apparently conflicting texts of the Rishis it undoubtedly became "intellectual dishonesty" for there is nothing to show that they honestly endeavoured. For instance when their Lordships of the Privy Council decide that though Manu expressly says to the contrary the propetry of a brahmin, dying issueless and even without a remote reversioner merges in the king, as it cannot be constructed in that way, it cannot be said that they betray their lack of honesty intellectually, because Heaven only knows why. You will therefore be generous enough to admit that when the followers of the intellectually dishonest commentators, hesitate to vote for you they mean no disrespect to you.

The truth is that the fundamental basis is entirely different between reformers and the followers of the Vedic religion. Your exposition of the origin and development of the Hindu Law (*Daily Express* 1-5-21) clearly indicates that you have a good grounding on the basic principles of Indian History as taught by Westerners. But as a Hindu by birth and profession you ought to have taken the trouble to see whether the traditional custodians of the Vedic religion have any other history to give. It is true that the Smritis were written at different periods by different Rishis, but it is not true that it was done to meet the then existing and ever-changing social conditions. In fact the agreement in the writings of the various Rishis far surpasses their differences. To the orthodox it is plain that the Smritis were carved out of the Vedas which are a vast Ocean. It is therefore quite natural that the Rishis differed in their interpretations of the passages of the Vedas. Even in the ritualistic portions of the Vedas they have differed in details and sometimes in fundamentals also, while agreeing in all the essentials as is evidenced from the writings of Bodhayana, Apasthamba, Aswalayana and a host of others. It therefore did not require the magic of time or the changes in social customs to induce the Rishis at different times to write their views. It is a matter of experience that the present state of the Hindu Society is essentially the same as it was in the days of the Mahabharata. Even a casual perusal of Sirkar's "Mimamsa Rules of interpretation of Smriti Law" (Tagore Law Lectures 1905) will convince you of this view of the orthodox people.

As regards the commentators the position chosen by them was this :—

They were charitable enough to admit that the ancient text-writers were as much conversant with the Vedic Literature and customs of the country as they were; and yet they have differed. It cannot be that they were unable to understand and interpret the Vedas intelligently. Hence the passages ought to be construed in such a way as to be in harmony with one another. This clearly indicates the broad vision, humanity and virility on the part of the commentators, but according to you it is simply "lip obeisance," which did not attest to the possession of a robust and manly frame of mind which boldly could proclaim that the time for change is come and that the change must be introduced." (*Daily Express* 1—5—21). Thus we both do not agree. But unfortunately you yourself are not free from such a crime as is evidenced by your cautious legislation of adopting the line of least resistance. You could have acted boldly.

The position accorded to women in the Hindu Law may be most humiliating to you, but to us orthodox Hindus women are objects of love and regard both in theory as well as in practice (see Manu Chapter 3). It is quite reasonable that the property should be preserved in the clan to which it belongs since the social adjustments were made so as to be in harmony with the religious efficacy as prescribed in the Sastras. In this connection I wish to bring to your kind notice that in your recent Bill which has become the law of the land, you have not provided for the religious efficacy but simply took compassion on what you consider to be the woeful position of women and shed pious tears. Thus you have helped to destroy the fabric of the ancient Hindu institution. I am subject to correction on this point.

I quite agree that "the principle of exclusion from inheritance deserves very serious consideration" (*Daily Express* 1—5—21) for the law of the Smriti had been misconstrued in regard to the inheritance of the leper, the blind, and others. The word *Niramsa* which occurs in regard to them had been understood as meaning "absolute exclusion" and thus the Rishis have been

easily held up to ridicule. They were not inhuman. I believe, Sir, you have heard of "Visvarupa," the commentator of 'Yagnyavalkya,' who lived ages before "Vignanesvara." I believe you have also seen his work which was published by Mr. S. S. Setlur B.A., B.L. an Advocate of the Bombay and Madras High Courts. You will be glad to know that this "Visvarupa" is no other than the great "Suresvaracharya" the uncompromising exponant of the karma marga first and afterwards the devout disciple of the great "Sankaracharya." This "Visvarupa" says that *Niramsa* is only directory and does not mean absolute prohibition for it simply indicates that they are practically unfit to manage the property themselves: and as a matter of fact the accepted tradition or "*Sampradaya*" is that they have their proper share in their grand-father's property and also that their (lepers, blind and others) sons are not excluded, but are absolutely entitled to get their proper shares. You will kindly see that *Sampradaya* is the word used by "Visvarupa." How this becomes absurd is hard to understand. It is exactly "because of their inability to earn" that the Smritis have enjoined that they are not absolutely prohibited. You will also kindly see that it was not the invention of "Visvarupa" but of the long tradition that went before him. Incidentally we may remark that the origin of the Mahabarata feud becomes perfectly intelligible on this principle. Real, unnassuming, simple, good-natured and truthful custodians of the traditional Vedic religion were contemptuously ignored and hence all these troubles of the modern lawyers arose. It will also be a surprise to you to learn that "Jeemutavahana" the Bengal Lawyer existed before the great "Vignanesvara" as is evidenced from the "Kalaviveka."

The procedure you have adopted in regard to your so-called reforms of the Hindu Law does not seem reasonable or sound. You first simply invited criticisms in the Press especially English Press and then you thought your duty ended there. The proper procedure ought to have been that you should have consulted the Pundits living in secluded villages who are the brain portion of the nation and invited discussions. It is not enough if you consult your lawyer friends. Most of them have no good grounding on the traditional lore of the ancients. They have come to know of the Hindu Law only from Dr. Mayne. Your other suggestion that the Legislative Assembly should take the place of the discussion of the Pandits is astounding as it betrays a lack of historical knowledge. Never was the Hindu Law framed by the Kings or by their assemblies. The Law was always in the hands of the people and the Kings simply administered the Law. You do not seem to be aware of the injustice of the non-Hindus voting for the benefit of the Hindus in the modern Legislative bodies. If you carry the people with you and then legislate for their benefit it will be entirely different and perhaps laudable too. Though weak the orthodox has to live in this world until he is thoroughly exterminated and till then he is determined to struggle for life. Under these circumstances it is not charitable that as an honest man you should require their votes. I therefore request that you will kindly make a fresh announcement that you do not require their votes.

Mylapore,
Nachiappa St.
20th April 1923.

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Reply.

To THE EDITOR
The Hindu Message.

Sir

I would not have considered it necessary to reply to the open letter of Mr. Natesa Sastriar had it not been for the fact that you forwarded it to me before publication; apparently from the prominence you intend giving the communication, you regard him as the champion of orthodoxy. To him and to those of his way of thinking my answer is the life I am living: I believe there are many in and out of Madras who know my ways of living. If that is heterodox, I have no answer to give.

If orthodoxy means that a Hindu should feel no concern when he sees that his own son's daughters, his daughter's daughter, his sister and his sister's son are to come into the line of inheritance only after agnates seven degrees removed are exhausted, then I confess I am heterodox: If it is a sin to try to secure for the blind, the deaf and the dumb their patrimony instead of a pittance for maintenance, I am a renegade from Hinduism However it may be permissible even for myself to point out that this pillar of orthodoxy does not seem to recognise the difference between precepts of religions and rules and regulations intended to promote social well-being: This gentleman speaks of a suffering minority—It is because I am anxious that the prestige and progress of that minority should be advanced that I have ventured to agitate in the manner I have done. If my conviction that orthodoxy would be purer for a little shedding off of the non essentials stands in the way of securing the votes of the men of the writer's way of thinking, I shall have to submit to the inevitable—I have nothing to recant, no action to go back upon.

Yours truly
T. V. Seshagiri Aiyar

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